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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) ACN 91013			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Strategic Studies Institute		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) AWCI		7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION	
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)		9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
			WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.		
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) Soviet Military Strategy in the 1990s: Alternative Futures					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) COL David M. Glantz					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Final		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 91 Jun 20	
15. PAGE COUNT 60					
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP			
			Military strategy; Soviet Union; strategic environment; Soviet military policy		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)					
<p>Today the certainties of the cold war world are fast eroding, and there is uncertainty regarding what structures will replace them. In the past, similar periods of profound changes have often produced instability and conflict. This reality impels us to understand more thoroughly the nature and scope of the changes we confront. The Soviet Union rests at the focal point of those global changes. Revolutionary currents have swept across the nation which have severely shaken its internal political structure. At present it is unclear whether revolution or renewed authoritarianism will result. What is clear is that the strategic posture of the Soviet Union has been irrevocably altered and what will replace it in the future is yet to emerge. The United States will have to accommodate to these changes. How well it does so depends directly on how well it understands what is occurring in the Soviet Union and what the consequences of those profound changes will (over)</p>					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Marianne Cowling			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (717) 245-3001		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL AWCI

DD Form 1473, JUN 86

Previous editions are obsolete.

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**SOVIET MILITARY STRATEGY IN THE 1990s:
ALTERNATIVE FUTURES**

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June 20, 1991

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FOREWORD

Today the world is experiencing a period of political, economic, and social change, which is likely to produce fundamentally new regional and global relationships among nations. The certainties of the cold war world, which although threatening to many were well understood by all, are fast eroding, and there is uncertainty regarding what structures will replace them. The global security system which endured during the cold war, despite all of its attendant risks, produced 50 years of relative global stability. As the cold war ends one must reflect on the fact that in the past similar periods of profound changes have often produced instability and conflict. This reality impels us to understand more thoroughly the nature and scope of the changes we confront.

The Soviet Union rests at the focal point of those global changes. Revolutionary currents have swept across the nation which have severely shaken its internal political structure and effected major changes in its international stance. The Warsaw Pact has dissolved and democratization threatens to alter the very structure of the Soviet state. At present it is unclear whether revolution or renewed authoritarianism will result. What is clear is that the strategic posture of the Soviet Union has been irrevocably altered and what will replace it in the future is yet to emerge. The impact of these momentous changes will reverberate around the world, affecting existing security structures in virtually every region. The United States, as the world's other superpower, will, of necessity, have to accommodate to these changes. How well it does so depends directly on how well it understands what is occurring in the Soviet Union and what the consequences of those profound changes will be.

This study of future Soviet strategic options is a modest beginning in the process of understanding what is occurring, why, and what the implications may be.



KARL W. ROBINSON
Colonel, U.S. Army
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

CHAPTER 1

THE CONTEMPORARY STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Since the mid-1980s, a wide variety of internal and external political, economic, and social factors have coalesced to produce striking change in the Soviet Union and its former satellites. Although no one can predict with any degree of certainty what these changes will ultimately produce, they must be considered as the context for future Soviet military policy, doctrine, and strategy.

Within the Soviet Union, economic stagnation has reached the crisis point. The decay of the Soviet economy and ineffective attempts to deal with it have reduced the economy's productivity and, more important in a military sense, denied it the prospect of mastering the rapid technological changes that are sweeping the developed world. Economic crisis has, in turn, fostered political and social turmoil which threatens the fabric of Soviet political life and society. Democratization, unleashed in a conscious attempt to legitimize official programs for economic reform, has concurrently released new political forces, which have altered the rigid political structure of the Soviet state, and nationalism, which has simultaneously generated both centripetal forces within the Russian nation and centrifugal forces on the part of the Soviet Union's national republics. Democratization has also severely undermined the power and authority of its natural targets, the Communist party and the *nomenklatura*.¹

These economic and political crises have, in turn, underscored vividly the class structure and ethnic nature of the Soviet state, have exacerbated class, ethnic, and religious distinctions, and have fostered virtual low-level social warfare among classes and nationalities. This is a particularly vexing problem in light of the impending minority of Great Russians within the Soviet Union. For the first time, the leadership of the Soviet Union must directly ponder the possible dissolution of

the Soviet state. All of these forces, singly or in combination, will affect both the nature of the future Soviet state and the shape and form of its military establishment as the Soviet leadership strives to achieve a consensus regarding its position in relation to Europe and the rest of the world.

While internal factors continue to condition the Soviet Union's reaction to the world, in a political and military sense the principal future variable affecting the Soviet Union is the structure of the international arena itself. There, major changes have occurred and are occurring that the Soviet leadership must take into account as it formulates its policies and strategies. The Soviet perspective now reflects recognition of the following factors:

- The arms race of the 1980s which, while creating enormous economic pressures on both sides, failed to accord military advantage to the Soviet Union (and, in fact, may have accorded advantage to the West and simultaneously shattered the Soviet economic base);
- The changing international political balance characterized, in part, by the increased political and economic power of Europe (EEC) and Japan; the opening of China to limited Western influence; the unleashing of politically potent religious forces in the Middle East and potentially in southern Asia; and the continued pauperization and political weakness of friendly Third World governments;
- The new technological revolution, principally in cybernetics, and high-precision weapons, which, because of its inability to compete, places the Soviet Union at increasing disadvantage;
- The world-wide revival of nationalism and its negative effects on the internal and external status quo;
- The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and, with it, diminished Soviet influence in Europe (in a cold war sense);
- The unification of Germany;

- The limited success of Soviet-sponsored or supported wars of national liberation, the curtailment or asserted abandonment of many military assistance programs, and the ensuing political and economic enfeeblement of Soviet client states worldwide.

All of these complex internal and external factors have impelled change within the Soviet Union, and these changes have evolved in a dialectical sense with one generating another. Gorbachev's initial economic program of acceleration [*uskorenie*], which was designed to speed up economic activity, failed and instead underscored the need for openness and debate of vital issues. The policy of *perestroika* followed, a revitalization program of both the economy and the military, which, like a germ developing in a petri dish, had to be accompanied by a program of *glasnost* to lend it credence and vitality. When it became clear that institutional constraints threatened to throttle *perestroika*, the ensuing program of democratization [*demokratizatsiia*] sought to break the institutional log-jam and legitimize reform, but in so doing destroyed much of the institutional base of the Soviet Union.

Each of these stages has reinforced the dialectical truth that all trends are interrelated, and one cannot have genuine progress in one realm without commensurate progress in other important realms. This truth propelled Gorbachev in the spring of 1990 to embrace reform on all fronts, with inherent risks, while attempting to control the entire process through the new institution of President of the Soviet Union. The military corollary of these fundamental internal and external political, economic, and social changes has been a revision of Soviet military policy and declared Soviet intent to implement a defensive military doctrine. That, in turn, requires articulation of a new military strategy.

Three broad new factors have emerged, which promise to shape future Soviet military strategy. First, in the mid-1980s, the Soviet military began a fundamental reassessment of the nature and requirements of future war, especially regarding what they perceived as an ongoing technological revolution in new weaponry (in particular, high-precision weaponry), whose ultimate effects they could not readily predict. Second, a wave

of internal uncertainty swept through the ruling and intellectual circles within the Soviet Union regarding the political, economic, and, finally, the ideological bases of the Soviet state. Third, throughout a broad spectrum of Soviet society, disenchantment grew over the questionable nature and seemingly negative effects of existing Soviet military policy and strategy. This strategy was characterized by active Soviet military intervention abroad and an intense and seemingly unlimited arms race, which, in turn, had placed immense burdens on the Soviet economy and seemed to offer in return little real gain in the Soviet Union's international stature.

All of these factors contributed to decisions by a new Party Secretary and Premier, Mikhail Gorbachev, to implement a series of programs to reform the Soviet state, principally in an internal sense. These internal reform programs inexorably involved the realm of military policy, doctrine, and, ultimately, strategy as well. In 1987, within the context of these changes, the Soviets adopted a new defensive military doctrine, which is now producing revolutionary changes in Soviet military strategy.

THE PARAMETERS OF STRATEGIC DEBATE

Initial Historical Paradigms for Defensiveness. Beginning in 1985, the Soviets designated a new period in military development, soon defined within the context of a recast military doctrine emphasizing "defensiveness" in its political component, but clearly shaped in many of its military-technical aspects by reassessments which had begun during the previous decade.² Subsequently, Soviet theorists articulated several strategic paradigms, couched analogously in historical terms, which they claimed applied to all periods of history. The Soviet academician, A. Kokoshin, and former General Staff theorist, Colonel General V. Larionov, publicly advanced four enduring strategic paradigms, which were distinguished from one another by their relative degree of offensiveness or defensiveness. Other theorists have since postulated additional models related to these original paradigms as new political realities emerge.³ The Soviets advanced these paradigms to provide a framework for

discussing future strategy within the General Staff and the Soviet body politic as a whole, and to create a basis for broader international discussions of future global strategic relationships. In essence, the paradigms seemed to offer a basis for mastering future change in a more rational and studied fashion. Quite naturally, the paradigms themselves were subject to interpretation.

On a scale of increasing defensiveness, the four original paradigms proposed by Kokoshin and Larionov were as follows:

- *Offensive Defense*: Opposing states or coalitions possess strong, offensively-oriented force groupings, which intend to conduct operations on enemy territory.

Mutual offensive intent and suspicion of their opponent's motives characterize the strategic stance of contending parties in this model. This paradigm replicates traditional strategic circumstances in European history and strategic relationships dominant in the 20th century, including pre-First World War Europe, and, in the Soviet view, the cold war as well. Kokoshin and Larionov argued that this traditional strategic situation, if permitted to exist in the future given the technological revolution in weaponry, would be suicidal for all contending parties.

In this paradigm opposing states or coalitions possess a mature strategic posture, that is multiple strategic echelons of armed forces, either existing in the peacetime force structure or rapidly mobilizable from strategic reserves. Depending on the actual circumstances surrounding the outbreak of war, each side, using covert measures, can achieve a considerable degree of strategic surprise and an initial superiority of three-to-one over its opponent. That superiority will, however, dissipate as mobilization continues, and ensuing warfare would be prolonged and have catastrophic impact on both sides.

- *Strategic Counteroffensive Defense*: The Kursk paradigm for premeditated defense, which postulates one state or coalition absorbing a major enemy blow, and then delivering a decisive counteroffensive that

carries well into enemy territory.⁴ Although labelled by the Soviets as "defensive," characteristics of the historical example used (the Kursk operation) underscore the inherently offensive nature of this paradigm. For this reason, many Soviet theorists have since turned away from the Kursk paradigm as a suitable example of future defensiveness to another which seems more appropriate.

The Kursk paradigm postulates a semi-mature strategic posture on both sides, consisting of a single strategic echelon and a strategic reserve. In a period of crisis, either state or coalition could achieve operational-strategic advantage over its opponent on the basis of a two-to-two overall correlation of forces. Depending upon the course and outcome of initial operations, the defending side has the capability of launching counteroffensive operations, which can propel its forces into the territory of its opponent.

- *Operational Counteroffensive Defense:* The Khalkhin-Gol paradigm, which replicates Soviet 1939 operations against the Japanese and United Nations' operations in Korea (1951-53) postulates that each state or coalition possesses the capability of routing an enemy force on its own territory, but is not capable of penetrating enemy territory.⁵ Although this paradigm seems more appropriate to today's situation than does that of Kursk, close examination of the circumstance at Khalkhin-Gol reveals other facets of the historical example which make it less relevant and somewhat more suspect. These facets include the secret Soviet force build-up prior to the 1939 operation, which accorded the Soviets considerable surprise; Soviet numerical advantage, particularly in armored vehicles and aircraft; and political circumstances associated with the German threat to the Soviet Union, which restrained the Soviets at Khalkhin-Gol.

The Soviets also cite the period from June 10, 1951 to July 27, 1953 during the Korean War as being representative of this paradigm. During that period warring parties tacitly agreed not to cross a certain demarkation line and not to expand the scale

of military operations. Here, difficulties in determining the territorial limits of combat, compensation for losses and degree of restraint on both sides cloud the model's utility.

According to this paradigm, a state or coalition can achieve only temporary operational advantage. Because the postulated peacetime strategic posture of both sides involves only an incomplete and partial strategic echelonment (in the form of a partial single strategic echelon), surprise and resulting advantage are only transitory. The defender has the capability of parrying the initial offensive blow and responding with operational counterstrokes, which clear his territory of enemy forces. Inherent in this paradigm is the assumption that the defender will be unable to conduct offensive action on the territory of the initial invader.

- *Non-Offensive Defense*: Opposing states or coalitions, possessing only limited tactical capabilities, neither of which are able to undertake any offensive operations of operational or strategic consequence.⁶ This paradigm addresses relative capabilities and falters on the amorphous definition of defensive adequacy or, in current parlance, "sufficiency." It implies that neither side considers war imminent, and both sides agree on how to define "limited tactical capabilities." Within the parameters of this paradigm, neither warring state or coalition possesses operational or strategic offensive potential. Both sides lack strategic echelons and instead possess only tactical or limited operational capabilities. In this circumstance tactical incursions are met by tactical counterattacks. These limited capabilities preclude achievement by either side of operational or strategic advantage.

In postulating these four enduring paradigms, Soviet theorists have created an analytical framework suited for internal strategic debates and, more importantly, for international discussion of critical strategic issues.

President Gorbachev's current program of "defensiveness" postulates Soviet maintenance of a defensive capability sufficient to absorb and repulse any enemy blow. The program

leaves several fundamental questions unanswered. First, "Is defensiveness genuine?" Second, if it is genuine, "Is it based upon the Kursk, or Khalkhin-Gol paradigms or on yet another model?" And, finally, will future developments in the Soviet Union permit a rational model based on military considerations to be implemented, and will the General Staff and Ministry of Defense view of strategic paradigms and models prevail in the face of other realities?

Emerging Historical Models. There are additional models set within the context of the Kokoshin and Larionov paradigms, which may better suit future Soviet strategic conditions, capabilities, and intentions should Soviet defensive doctrine persist. The Soviets surfaced the first of these new models in 1989 when they published a document purporting to be their strategic defensive plan for operations by the Group of Occupation Forces Germany (GOFG) in the late 1940s.⁷ This "pre-cold war" model for defensiveness seemed to provide an excellent guide for a Soviet forward defensive strategic posture in the post-cold war years. Militarily, it could have resembled either the Kursk or the Khalkhin-Gol paradigm. Political events in eastern Europe throughout 1989 and 1990 rendered the model irrelevant.

The Soviets have since commenced extensive discussion of new models related to the Soviet strategic posture from 1921 to the commencement of war on the Eastern Front in 1941. Recent and prospective changes in the Soviet Union and in the European political and economic structure as well, to some extent, recall conditions that existed during that period. Close analysis of that 20-year period reveals a second and third potential model. The more optimistic second model regards Soviet military strategy during the 1920s and up to 1935. It postulates a Soviet Union beset by severe internal problems, attempting to develop a military strategy to cope with post-Treaty of Versailles realities—specifically, a Europe whose central feature was a militarily weak but dissatisfied Germany bordered on the east by a group of newly-emerged, independent, but politically unstable successor states and on the west by war-wearied capitalistic powers bent on maintenance of the post-1919 status quo. The reduced threat

to the Soviet Union posed by post-World War European states and the necessity for dealing with serious internal problems dictated Soviet adoption of a defensive military strategy characterized by maintenance of a smaller peacetime armed force and a mechanism-permitting a transition to stronger forces in the event of war.

The third and more pessimistic model reflects Soviet strategy from roughly 1935 to 1941, when the Soviet Union was compelled to meet the challenge of sharply changing conditions within the Soviet Union and Europe as a whole. The increased industrial strength of the Soviet state and the emerging threat of German Nazism and Japanese militarism sharply increased the potential external threat and Soviet capabilities for responding to it. The 1930s paradigm was characterized by a more aggressive Soviet military strategy (although still ostensibly defensive) involving the maintenance of a large peacetime military force and a more efficient system for making the transition from peace to war—a system ultimately characterized by the term "creeping up to war" [*vpolzanie v voinu*].

The last two potential models address a wide range of emerging military and political realities and provide a useful framework for analysis of likely political and military implications of future Soviet military strategies. The Soviets believed the first model was applicable at a time when the USSR planned to retain the groups of forces in the forward area. That is no longer the case. The two pre-Second World War models provide a framework for analyzing Soviet strategic issues when Soviet forces complete their withdrawal to a national bastion within the Soviet Union. Kokoshin and Larionov's paradigms have provided a framework for discussion within the Soviet Union of future strategic options. If understood by the West, they can serve a similar function in multilateral and global security debates. The more recent historical models represent a more refined evaluation of strategic experiences, which the Soviets believe can offer valid bases upon which to formulate a future strategy.

CHAPTER 2

FORMULATING A NEW MILITARY STRATEGY

National Interests and Defining the Threat. Future Soviet military strategy will reflect five basic realities: the shape and form of the future Soviet (or Russian) state; Soviet (or Russian) national interests and objectives; the nature of perceived threats; Soviet perception of the nature of future war; and the potential of the national material base (economy, manpower, etc.). As the Soviet political and military leadership study these realities, they are driven by habit and inclination to consider what the past has to offer in the way of solutions. They understand that study of the past offers no panaceas. But it does offer hints as to proper action at a time when conditions existed which may have been similar to those existing today or which will exist in the future.

Whereas in the past many in the West have assumed the Soviet Union's national interests and policy objectives envisioned the ultimate destruction of capitalism, current realities argue that Soviet interests today focus more on insuring the security and survival of the Soviet state. Whether or not Soviet national interests during the cold war (1949-89) were offensive, there is now considerable similarity between Soviet interests today, and probably in the future as well, and analogous Soviet interests in the 1920s and 30s. Specifically, there are strong reasons to accept the validity of Soviet claims that their national policy, in general, and their military policy, in particular, is now defensive. In the last analysis, the concrete nature of future strategic Soviet posture will settle this question.

One reality concerning future Soviet military strategy, which is as true today as it was yesterday, is the fact that it will continue to reflect perceived threats. Threat analysis in a time of change is difficult at best, and it inherently involves defining a range of threats and then fashioning a strategy which can cope with a combination of the most likely and most dangerous

of them. One can postulate a range of future international political relationships differentiated from one another by the degree to which each poses a threat to the Soviet Union. Four principal threat variants based on these relationships may evolve, listed here in descending order of favorability. Recent commentary by Soviet strategists and political figures and available evidence concerning the process of past Soviet threat analysis argues that the General Staff has and will continue to accept these variants as a valid base for formulating military policy and strategy. The categorization of specific states within each variant are partial, and obviously tentative.⁸

THREAT VARIANTS

Variant 1 (Best Case).

Characteristics: Economically and, to a lesser degree, politically unified Europe with German, Soviet, and East European states' participation. Abolition of all military alliances and general disarmament of all European states. Stability based on status quo in Asia. This variant has never before existed.

National Attitudes.

Group 1: Potentially hostile to the Soviet Union: Japan, China, Iran, Afghanistan (if Mujahadin rules), Pakistan, Rumania, South Korea, Turkey, Israel

Group 2: Neutral or ambivalent: Great Britain, France, Germany, Hungary, Finland, U.S.A. (could be friendly depending on events in Asia), Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Spain, Egypt, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Iraq

Group 3: Friendly to the Soviet Union: Bulgaria, Serbia (Yugoslavia), Syria, Vietnam, India, North Korea

Variant 2 (Good Case).

Characteristics: NATO as a reduced-scale political alliance without German participation. Unified, neutralized, and partially demilitarized Germany. Soviet Union with limited bilateral political, economic, or military agreements with

selected Eastern European states. Continued U.S. security role in Asia and Pacific with growing Japanese participation. This somewhat resembles political conditions existing in the 1920s.

National Attitudes.

Group 1: Potentially hostile to the Soviet Union: United States, Great Britain, France, Japan, Turkey, Italy, Hungary, Iran, China, Israel, Pakistan, South Korea, Rumania, Afghanistan (if Mujahadin rules).

Group 2: Neutral or ambivalent: Austria, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Greece, Switzerland, Egypt, Iraq

Group 3: Friendly to the Soviet Union: India, Serbia (Yugoslavia), Bulgaria, Vietnam, North Korea, Syria

Variant 3 (Satisfactory Status Quo).

Characteristics: Potentially hostile NATO with military power restricted by CFE arms limitations. Participation in NATO of unified Germany with a reduced military establishment. Token U.S. military presence in Europe. Soviet bilateral agreements with selected East European states. Continued U.S. security in Asia and the Pacific shared with Japan. This continues some of the unpleasant uncertainties of cold war relationships but, in favorable conditions, can evolve into Variant 2.

National Attitudes.

Group 1: Potentially hostile to Soviet Union: NATO nations, Japan, Iran, Hungary, China, Pakistan, Rumania, South Korea, Israel, Afghanistan (if Mujahadin)

Group 2: Neutral or ambivalent: Poland, Finland, Sweden, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Iraq

Group 3: Friendly to Soviet Union: India, Serbia (Yugoslavia), Bulgaria, Vietnam, North Korea, Syria

Variant 4 (Worst Case).

Characteristics: NATO dissolved and replaced by bilateral political and military agreements between the United States, France, and Great Britain. Unified, militarized revisionist Germany. Competition between Soviet Union and Germany for influence in Eastern Europe. Remilitarized, expansionist Japan and diminished U.S. influence in Asia and the Pacific. These international relationships, to some degree, resemble conditions in the 1930s.

National Attitudes.

Group 1: Hostile to Soviet Union: Germany, Japan, Hungary, Rumania

Group 2:* Potentially hostile to Soviet Union: United States, Iran, China, Great Britain, Pakistan, South Korea, France, Turkey, Israel

Group 3:* Neutral: Poland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Spain, Iraq

Group 4: Friendly to Soviet Union: Vietnam, India, Bulgaria, Syria, Serbia (Yugoslavia), North Korea

*This is a particularly volatile relationship, in that, depending on Japanese and German policies, states in groups 2 and 3 (including the United States) could become friendly with the Soviet Union, in a virtual return to the structure of the wartime Grand Alliance.

Juxtaposed against these threat variants based on international relationships and national attitudes are a series of alternative Soviet domestic futures which can have an influence on the former. Although there are numerous possibilities, they can be lumped into three general categories, each with a specific set of probable impacts on the threat variants and vice versa.

Alternative 1: Gorbachev or a successor succeeds in reforming the Soviet state. This would require some positive economic reform and a degree of democratization in the Soviet Union and would involve probable outright loss of Soviet

sovereignty over the Baltic States, Moldavia, and possibly other regions. Some form of federal structure would likely govern the relationship between existing republics and the Soviet Union. International variants 1 and 2 would facilitate this process, variant 3 would only marginally affect it, and variant 4 could definitely inhibit the process. On the other hand, successful reform within the Soviet Union would tend to foster the development of variants 1 and 2 internationally. This alternative has no precedents.⁹

Alternative 2: The reforms of Gorbachev or his successor fail and either democratic revolution or authoritarian reaction ensues. Although this might occur in any circumstance for internal reasons, international variant 4 could undoubtedly speed this outcome. A "democratic" revolution would likely fragment the Soviet Union, produce a new federal structure, and contribute to international variants 1 or 2. Return to a more authoritarian regime (rule by party, nationalist movement, police union, military, or a combination of all four) would resist national fragmentation, probably by force, and promote international variants 3 and possibly 4. In addition, there is no guarantee that victorious authoritarianism would be able to stave off ultimate revolution or reform. The precedents for this alternative are, on the one hand, February 1917 and, on the other, Stalin's authoritarianism or that of his successors.

Alternative 3: Gorbachev or his successors muddle through with enough reform to maintain a shaky status quo. In this instance the Soviet government will have to contend with continuous, long-term economic, political, and ethnic problems. These internal contradictions would be exacerbated by international variants 3 and 4 and would, in turn, certainly hinder achievement of variant 1, and possibly variant 2. This characterizes earlier failed Soviet attempts at reform (1954, 1960, 1970s).

If one were to distill from all four threat variants all conceivable threats to the Soviet Union, they would include the following:

ALL CONCEIVABLE THREATS: 1995

- 1) Continued full NATO threat to the Soviet Union;
- 2) Emergence of a hostile unified Germany and a remilitarized and aggressive Japan;
- 3) Strategic nuclear and peripheral threat by the United States;
- 4) Residual threat from a truncated NATO;
- 5) Foreign support of ethnic unrest in the Soviet Union;
- 6) Unrest in Eastern Europe with Western intervention;
- 7) Unrest in Eastern Europe with Soviet domestic implications;
- 8) Domestic ethnic unrest;
- 9) Nuclear and chemical weapons proliferation in hostile or potentially hostile border states;
- 10) Transnational threats with military implications (including religious fundamentalism in southern Asia, narcotics, and terrorism).

In terms of likelihood and desirability, these threats break down as follows:

- Threats 1 and 2 least desirable
- Threat 4 desirable and most likely
- Threats 3, 5, 6, 9, and 10 possible
- Threats 7 and 8 probable

Since it is awkward, if not impossible, to predict one's own demise, the Soviet General Staff must plan on the basis of some sort of stability being maintained. Likewise, the Soviets cannot anticipate or meet every threat. It is reasonable to assume that threat variants 2 or 3 are most likely to evolve and can provide a reasonable and valid basis upon which to formulate future military policy and strategy. A majority of Soviet policy makers and military strategists today are addressing these two variants. They would like to see threat

variant 2 result, but must prudently plan for the circumstances of variant 3. The trick is to encourage the evolution of variant 2 (or even 1) by formulating a strategy (and hence a threat for the West) which does not impel Western powers to continue variant 3, but still satisfies Soviet security needs if variant 3 should persist. In this respect, and in many others, the 1920s model looks increasingly attractive.

There is, however, a sizeable and vocal minority of military strategists who, for emotional or other reasons, raise the specter of threat variant 4 (worst case) as a valid, and even necessary, planning consideration. Indications are that this group may predominate within the current General Staff. These strategists tend to view the 1930s model with much greater concern and, hence, urge political leaders to maintain a more powerful military establishment and seek closer ties with Britain and the United States.

Assuming that more moderate forces predominate, Soviet strategists will distill from threat variants 2 and 3 a finite list of possible threats, which can provide a reasonable, and safe, basis upon which to formulate future military strategy. This pared-down list might be as follows:

POSSIBLE THREATS: 1995

- 1) Strategic nuclear and peripheral threat by the United States;
- 2) Residual threat from a reduced-strength NATO;
- 3) Foreign support of ethnic unrest in the Soviet Union;
- 4) Domestic ethnic unrest;
- 5) Unrest in Eastern Europe with Western intervention;
- 6) Unrest in Eastern Europe with Soviet domestic implications;
- 7) Nuclear and chemical weapons proliferation in hostile or potentially hostile border states;
- 8) Transnational threats with military implications.

Soviet military strategy will likely be fashioned to cope with these potential threats. Should, however, those strategists who fear the worst case (variant 4) prevail, a markedly different picture of the threat will emerge, characterized by preeminent Soviet concern with threat 2 (emergence of a hostile Germany and Japan) and a corresponding reduction in Soviet fear of the United States and non-German Western states.

CHAPTER 3

MASTERING FUTURE WAR

A second reality Soviet military planners must contend with in formulating a future military strategy is the nature of future war, in general, and the traditional concept of the initial period of war, in particular. In the past the General Staff has performed this task within a well-understood ideological context. The General Staff, the institution customarily entrusted with this task, has always experienced difficulty preparing the Soviet armed forces to conduct war 30 years in the future. The difficulty has not been with developing an accurate image of future war, for, in fact, as the experiences of the 1920s and 1930s have indicated, Soviet theoretical concepts were quite visionary. Rather, the General Staff has found it difficult to translate that vision of warfare into reality. They readily imagined the conceptual, technological, and force structural change required to exploit their vision, but could not impart these changes to the armed forces quickly or thoroughly enough.

Today that long-standing dilemma is even more serious, for, in fact, the General Staff is experiencing difficulty with the very process of foresight and forecasting. Increasingly, they cannot envision the nature of future war with the degree of certainty that they had in the past. Compounding that dilemma are the increasing problems Soviet industry is experiencing in developing and fielding new technology. The technical realm of future war most confounds and frustrates Soviet military theorists, for they know the state they serve is increasingly unable to respond to their needs. Moreover, they understand that new families of weapons, based on new physical principles, will appear, whose impact on warfare cannot now be understood.

The Soviets are experiencing two problems as they attempt to analyze future war: the first relates to who is doing the analysis and the second to the results of the analyses. The General Staff and its supporting research organizations, the

traditional sources of truth regarding future war, have been challenged by political and social scientists and economists of civilian academic institutes, whose *institutchiki* now also study the subject of war on the assumption that matters of war and its consequences are too great to be left to military men alone. General Staff analysis embodies continuity in Soviet military thought, and their views on future war are evolutionary and thoroughly consistent with those that they embraced in the 1970s and early 1980s. They recognize the significant impact of technological changes on warfare, but generally, and in contrast to the new civilian *institutchiki*, reject the idea that future war is now inconceivable.¹⁰ The General Staff has argued that, although the risk of global war still tends to deter political-military action in peacetime, war can still occur, and, if it does, fundamentally new types of weaponry are creating completely new forms of combat and increasing the complexity of warfare. The six key elements of Soviet General Staff assessments remain:

- The initial period of war;
- The likely intensity and scale of combat;
- The means (weaponry) to be employed;
- The consequences for the USSR economy and population;
- The duration of war;
- The influence of U.S. and NATO doctrine on "reasonable sufficiency."¹¹

In the General Staff view, Soviet ground forces' "defensive" operations would not be defensive throughout the entire war. Instead, the Soviet armed forces would act "decisively" if the enemy did not cease operations immediately. This seems to be consistent with Kokoshin and Larionov's second paradigm, (Kursk), but the "character of modern war" which they describe suggests a picture of warfare rather different from that postulated by the proponents of defensivism (the *institutchiki*), who tend to argue for an armed force whose strategy is consistent with Kokoshin's and Larionov's third (Khalkhin-Gol)

paradigm. The General Staff postulates that future war will be characterized by the following:

- Extremely high density, dynamic, and rapidly developing operations.
- Broad global extent, including operations in space.
- Extremely destructive combat of unprecedented scale.
- High expenditure of resources, particularly to seize and maintain the initiative.
- Fragmented [*ochagovyi*] combat. Disappearance of the "frontline" or "first echelon," so that traditional terms like Forward Edge of the Battle Area (FEBA), Forward Line of Own Troops (FLOT), or of Enemy Troops (FLET) are no longer meaningful. Rather "zones" of combat, up to 100 kilometers wide and deep would be created.
- No country or region would be safe from enemy action, since no "deep rear" [*glubokiy tyl*] would exist beyond the range of future weapons.
- Strategic goals would be achieved through combined arms operations: no particular weapons systems could be singled out as having overwhelming significance.
- The destruction of nuclear power generation and chemical production facilities during the course of a war, whether nuclear or conventional, would have disastrous effects on the theater of operations. The lessons of Chernobyl are clearly dominant here.
- Nuclear war could liquidate the world's population.¹²

On the other hand, the *institutchiki* point out the utter folly of war as Andre Kokoshin argued in November 1988:

Recently, at a time when the idea is taking root that war can no longer serve as a rational means of politics (at least not in Soviet-American relations, between the WTO and NATO), the need for the highest state and political leadership to know the fundamentals of military strategy, operational plans, the functioning of the military mechanics of carrying out decisions and so on, has by no means been eliminated. On the contrary, it is increasing.

This is because decisions made at the boundary between politics and strategy may have fatal and irreversible consequences.¹³

In a major article published in December 1988, General G. I. Salmanov presented a classic view of modern war in the language of the General Staff:

What, then, is new in the make-up of Soviet military doctrine, and how is it reflected in the nature of modern war?

In the first place—it is the reinforcement, and accentuation of its defensive orientation...

Defense in the initial period of a war is now regarded, not only as a means of bleeding the enemy with comparatively fewer forces, as a means of stopping him as quickly as possible and creating the necessary conditions for active counter-offensive action, but also as a means, and this is most important, of making the enemy think over and over again [*mnogo raz podumat*] before he decides to attack in the first place. In individual TVDs, defense can also be used to inflict prolonged delay on the enemy with comparatively small forces on previously prepared sectors.

At the present time, one must take issue with those who assert that with approximate parity of forces within the TVD, and with the sophistication of modern reconnaissance, the deployment of forces by an aggressor in, for example, Europe, is a chimaera. Defending this opinion, they quite reasonably assert that an aggressor can decide on an attack only if they will attain important strategic aims (for example, reaching the state frontier of the USSR) as a result of the first strategic operation.

To accomplish such an objective the aggressor would have to have a three- or four-to-one superiority in forces on main axes (and it is impossible not to agree with this). Evidently, to build up such a superiority secretly before the start of a war would hardly seem possible.

All this is true, if you do not consider a completely new qualitative improvement in the enemy's firepower, the sharply increased mobility of his shock grouping and what he recognizes as the main means of unleashing war—the surprise attack.

Even with a roughly equal balance of forces before the start of military action, the enemy, having started the war by surprise, will attempt to shift this balance in his favour on individual axes. Evidently, such a situation can be attained during an air-land

operation with the use of powerful fire strikes [*ognevymi udarami*] on corridors through our combat formations and by rapid insertion of strong groupings from mobile enemy infantry units, large-scale air assaults (*desanty*), army aviation, specially trained diversionary and reconnaissance detachments (groups), and so on. The activity of these groups, evidently, will unfold with their flanks covered by unbroken fire. The bringing up of our reserves will be impeded by deep fire strikes undertaken by aviation and long-range high-precision weapons.

Many might consider such a variant of the course of events as fantastic. But if we are not prepared for it in every way, this fantasy could become a terrible reality.¹⁴

Salmanov then underscored the central issue preoccupying the General Staff today, that of technology, stating:

In modern conditions, special timeliness and relevance [*aktual'nost'*] is accorded to those assets able to oppose new enemy weapons, which they plan to introduce into their armed forces during the next 10 to 15 years. It is very important to find answers in time, which will guarantee reduction in the effectiveness of enemy land, air and sea-launched high precision weapons, low-power lasers designed to blind people and put observation instruments and sights out of action, radar-absorbent coverings, which can significantly reduce the effectiveness of our air defences in combating tactical aircraft, and so on.

...it is necessary to pay special attention to achieving reliable cover for second echelons, reserves, and also [*logistic*] targets in the rear against strikes by enemy aviation and high-precision weapons during the course of an air-land operation by them.¹⁵

Salmanov's arguments concerning the nature of war both at the strategic and operational level, particularly the predominance of nonlinear warfare, were consistent with earlier General Staff analyses and evolutionary in nature.

Thus, systematic General Staff study of the nature of future war noted the emergence of new factors and influences which have altered traditional frameworks for planning, conducting, and studying war. Technological changes, such as development of high-precision weapons, electronic warfare systems, new heliborne systems and forces, and even space weapons and weapons whose nature and effects cannot now

be imagined have challenged the traditional linear nature of war, and in so doing have required redefinition of the geographical content of war (theaters, TVDs, and types of axes [directions—*napravlenii*]), and the nature of missions and objectives. In essence, war has become multidimensional or, in the General Staff's language, "fragmented" [*ochagovyi*]*—*a war without front lines.

Given these profound changes and their difficulty responding to them conceptually or structurally, General Staff analysts are accepting (albeit, often reluctantly) some of the arguments for defensiveness advanced by political authorities and argued for by the *institutchiki*. They find Kokoshin's and Larionov's four paradigms for a defensive strategy useful, but, unlike their civilian counterparts who look favorably on the Khalkhin-Gol variant, they take a more jaundiced view of the threat and are inclined to support the Kursk variant. As defenders of and advocates for military truth (and, to an increasing extent, political and social order as well as Russian tradition), the General Staff cannot permit itself to become transfixed by "defensiveness," which may be driven more by political and economic realities than by objective military factors.

What sort of synthesis can result from these dichotomous views? Certainly any synthesis must recognize international and domestic political, economic, and social realities, as well as military ones. Reasonable and prudent military assessments argue that Kokoshin's and Larionov's second and third paradigms (those of Kursk and Khalkhin Gol) are valid and useful. Political realities associated with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe have spelled the demise of the Soviet Union's forward defense strategy as well as the older concept of an offensive theater-strategic operation. These realities have forced the General Staff to consider anew some version of a "bastion strategy" for defense of the Soviet Union, based either upon Soviet experiences in the 1920s, which seem to correspond to the Khalkhin-Gol paradigm, or founded upon Soviet experiences in the late 1930s, which seem to fall within the parameters of the Kursk paradigm. This stark fact compels Soviet analysts to a thorough study of the 1920s and

1930s, times when a bastion strategy was operative. The only question that then remains is the degree to which domestic conditions will permit traditional General Staff analysis to continue to govern the manner in which the Soviets shape their strategy to the requirements of future war.

As an adjunct to this critical study of future war, the General Staff has been obliged to continue its study of the nature and impact of initial periods of war. The most recent published judgments are refinements of General S. P. Ivanov's major work on the subject, published in 1974, and subsequent articles written, through the mid-1980s.¹⁶ By the mid-1980s General Staff theorists had identified the following tendencies characterizing contemporary, and likely future, initial periods of war:

- Increased importance of the initial period due to massive use of new means of armed conflict;
- Increased influence of the results of the initial period on the subsequent course and outcome of hostilities;
- Enlarged scale of military operations;
- Increased use and importance of surprise;
- Shortened duration because of improved weaponry; and,
- Enhanced role and importance of maneuver.

While Soviet theorists earlier stressed the necessity for gaining the strategic initiative, ostensibly through offensive action, since 1987 their emphasis has been on defense during an initial period of war. Salmanov's declaration, cited earlier, emphasized the utility of defense during the initial period as a deterrent to war in the first place, as well as a prelude to counterattacks in the Khalkhin-Gol and Kursk sense.

In Salmanov's view, "The new doctrinal approach to the interrelationship of offensive and defense, and the extraordinary importance of effective preparedness to conduct the first defensive operations of the initial period of war," urgently dictates the following measures be taken to insure success in an initial period of war:¹⁷

1) Special efforts in preparing forces for their organization, deployment, and successful fulfillment of missions to repel aggression, whether conventional or nuclear, in particular, well-organized intelligence [*razvedka*] to prevent surprise attack.

2) Maintenance of a well-prepared and protected (in advance) defensive grouping capable of increasing its combat preparedness commensurate with an enemy buildup for an attack. Thus:

Our peacetime grouping and especially the first strategic echelon must be prepared, in the event of enemy attack, to conduct first defensive operations, independently and without reinforcement, and to prevent the enemy from penetrating into the depths of [its] territory, and to create conditions for successful conduct of subsequent operations to destroy him.¹⁸

3) Creation in a short period of time of a system of fire which can deal with an enemy attack, and particularly his second echelon—and immediately achieve fire and air superiority. (This involves anticipation of enemy technological achievements in the next 10 to 15 years.)

4) Protection of one's own second echelon, reserves, and critical rear area objectives. "In these conditions, defense proves to be not only a means and capability of repelling an enemy invasion, but also creating the prerequisites for seizing the initiative and conducting successful subsequent operations to destroy him." Defense must be active and strong because "it is very important. . .not to permit losses of a considerable portion of [one's] territory."¹⁹

Salmanov once again underscored the deterrent value of such a strategy, stating,

The logic of military-political thought is such that an enemy, reflecting on our preparation and constant readiness to repel aggressors rapidly and by the firmness, activeness, and power of our defense, will think more than once over the well-known truth, which says that 'to begin war is simpler than to end it.'²⁰

Numerous Soviet theorists have joined with Salmanov in studying the initial period of war, using as a principal vehicle

the experiences of June 1941. All have reinforced his conclusions.²¹ These recently published Soviet analyses on the initial period of war correspond, in their general description of the nature of combat, with similar studies written through 1985. When addressing the particular theme of offense versus defense, the recent studies accord with Soviet declarations of defensiveness promulgated since 1987. In this sense these descriptions directly relate to Kokoshin's and Larianov's Kursk and Khalkhin-Gol paradigms. The main thrust of all this literature, however, directly relates to the single most notable case where a "defensive" strategy failed, that is in June 1941. Traditionally, the Soviets have analyzed future conflict on an ideological basis and have defined a spectrum of wars among capitalist states or between capitalist and socialist states, which were the inevitable result of dialectical contradictions. This relatively neat framework, which has persisted from the 1920s through the cold war, ostensibly still exists today. The essentially ideological approach has provided context for identifying types of war, assessed the likelihood of their occurrence, and identified the most probable scenarios for the outbreak of war. Moreover, ideological imperatives have, to a large extent, undergirded the solution of all other strategic questions, such as determining strategic posture, specifying the geographical limits of conflict (TVD), and defining the role of *fronts*, war planning, and force generation. Today, as the importance of ideology rapidly withers, many ideological assumptions are also being questioned. This has led the civilian *institutchiki*, Kokoshin; the military theorist, General V. N. Lobov; and others to state cautiously:

A qualitatively increased level of interdependence has changed the nature of the struggle of capitalist states for a market and sources of raw materials—it has become different than it was, not only between the two world wars, but also during the first postwar decades. Most significant in this respect is the policy of Japan, which does not possess many types of raw materials (beginning with energy resources) and is significantly inferior to other capitalist states in military power.

When assessing the military-political situation in the world, we do not fully take into account the fact that today's bourgeois-democratic regimes in the leading capitalist countries,

even if conservative governments are in power, differ sharply from the extreme right-wing regimes of the likes of Hitler or Mussolini. To this day, in assessing the likelihood of war, sons of our scientists virtually do not take into consideration either these differences or the fact that the results of World War II had a profound effect on the social consciousness in the majority of developed capitalist states. Of course, this does not rule out the need to be constantly aware of the activities and the scale of influence of various extremist groups and organizations on the masses and the governments. They are capable of changing the political, and through it the military-political, situation.

The nature of the military-political interrelations between the USSR and the United States and between the Warsaw Pact and NATO has changed noticeably, the international situation has become less tense, and the immediate danger of aggression has decreased; however, the threat of war remains. Consequently, vigilance is required; it is necessary to know how the armed forces of the United States, NATO, and a number of other states are developing.²²

This softening of the ideological content of Soviet policy has contributed to prospects for arms control and lessened the likelihood of either general nuclear war or European-wide conventional war. Ideology is likely to continue to wither, if not altogether disappear. This has, in turn, increased the need for further study of previous strategic "truths." Kokoshin, Lobov, and others, suggest that study of the 1920s is an appropriate approach in the search for new answers to questions hitherto harnessed to ideology:

Now, when these problems of the theory of strategy, the art of war as a whole, and limiting and reducing armed forces and arms are being widely discussed, it is important to consider them in a historical context and turn to the forgotten or half-forgotten works of Soviet politologists and military theorists of the 1920s and early 1930s, a prominent place among whom belongs to A. A. Svechin.²³

Complicating this new approach to formulating strategy is the fact that the Leninist explanation of colonial war between imperialist powers and oppressed colonial states is also subject to doubt:

One should bear in mind that the period of the struggle by colonial and dependent countries for national liberation has to a

considerable extent ended in the traditional idea. More and more conflicts are taking place among developing countries themselves, who are in the stage of forming their own national and multinational (multi-tribe) statehood. The scale of the use of military force in this zone is not decreasing, and is increasing for a number of parameters. The process of devaluating the role of military force here has not yet begun, so the question of just and unjust wars must be largely resolved anew.²⁴

This fact increases the need to study local wars, both for their political content as it has affected socialist and capitalist great powers and for their military content, since wars between great powers have become less frequent, and any new system to foster global order must solve the dilemma of controlling the frequency and effect of local conflicts.

Kokoshin, Lobov, and others also cast doubt on the continued utility of studying the experiences of the last major world conflict (the Second World War), which to date has provided the basis for much Soviet military analysis:

The experience of the Great Patriotic War, illuminated with considerable distortions, given all its unquestioned value and given all the outstanding achievements of our military art, was often made absolute. This interfered with full-scale consideration of the increasingly new political, economic, scientific and technical, and operational-strategic factors which, following World War II, fundamentally changed, using A. A. Svechin's expression, the "strategic landscape." These factors included, above all, nuclear weapons, as well as the evolution of conventional weapons, a different appearance of local battlefields, and the use of military force not only on the battlefields, but also for direct and mediated political influence.²⁵

The last major anomaly arising from the erosion of the classic Marxist-Leninist framework for articulating military strategy is the growing tendency for conflict within the socialist camp:

The armed conflicts of the postwar decades between socialist states—the USSR and the PRC, the PRC and the PRV—have also not been studied. Conclusions and recommendations which could completely preclude such conflicts in the future have not been formulated sufficiently clearly.²⁶

The existence of these conflicts demonstrates the extent to which previously held assumptions are becoming invalid. Soviet theorists are considering all of these factors as they attempt to translate threat assumptions into a military strategy for the 1990s and beyond.

All of these developments will also affect future Soviet typology of war, which, although now unclear, may include the following:

- Wars among capitalist states;
- Wars between capitalist states and socialist states;
- Wars among socialist states;
- Wars among developing states;
- Wars between capitalist states and developing states;
- Ethnic or religious struggles within states.

While inevitable struggles between large capitalist and socialist coalitions and between imperialist powers and a unified proletariat of underdeveloped states (revolutionary wars) have diminished, and with them the specter of inevitable cataclysmic struggle, the prospect for an increased number of "classic" conflicts among competing states and smaller local wars has increased. In short, large wars of limited frequency may now be replaced by smaller wars of much greater frequency but of equal ferocity and destructiveness. This has placed a premium on the necessity to prevent proliferation of weapons of massive destruction (nuclear, chemical, and high-precision). This tendency accords with historical reality which tells us when great "concerts" of states, such as existed during the cold war, erode, international relations become more complex until a new "concert" is formed. Today, we seem to be entering such a period.

The Gulf War is the most recent example that has fueled Soviet concerns about the nature and consequences of future war. Soviet observers commented extensively on the diplomatic and military deployment phases (August 1990-January 1991) and on the air war (January-February 1991), and have begun critiquing the short but violent ground

phase. Although their judgments have often reflected a wide diversity of political views, and some have been polemical in tone and unrealistic in content, these observers have begun identifying several important trends or tendencies which are worthy of deeper analysis.

Certainly the question of coalition-building and power projection heads the list of important Soviet concerns. Although they themselves contributed to the process, they were impressed by the ability of the United States, within the context of the United Nations, to form a coalition from such diverse and often mutually hostile states. Observers have also noted the U.S. ability to move a sizable force to and, even more important, conduct an impressive logistical buildup in a distant region which lacked a well-developed communications infrastructure. Despite the fact that this process of "preparing a remote theater of military operations" took up to 6 months, the military results and political consequences of that feat will likely prompt increased concern on the part of those who, since Marshal Ogarkov's time, have warned of U.S. power projection capabilities.

To Soviet planners the most troubling trend was the seeming dominance of the battlefield, if not the theater as a whole, by modern technology in the form of high-precision weapons. Despite the predictable achievement by the Allies of total air superiority, the crushing weight of technology seemed to confirm the Soviets' worst fears—that new high-precision weapons, and weapons whose effect could not be readily predicted, in fact dominated and even altered the course and outcome of the subsequent ground war. These new weapons and, even more important, the systems employed to integrate them and older weapons in combat may, they fear, negate many more traditional measures of military power and have a revolutionary impact on future combined arms concepts. The role of the Allied naval forces during active operations and as a means of deception will reinforce Soviet anxiety regarding the issue of naval power in warfare and insure that the U.S. Navy is a subject of future arms control negotiations.

Deception and surprise, in the Soviets' view, played critical roles in both the air and ground phases of the war. This judgment reinforced the existing Soviet belief that recent technological developments have placed an even greater premium on the conduct of deception and the achievement of surprise. Both are absolute necessities if a state is to achieve success in future warfare. Early Soviet concerns that the Allies had not exploited the effects of the air campaign soon enough probably evaporated when they ultimately did so quickly, effectively, and with practically no ground casualties. Soviet anxiety over the poor performance of specific Soviet weapons and integrating systems will probably pale beside their realization that modern high-precision weaponry, artfully and extensively applied, produced paralysis and utter defeat. Subsequent large-scale Allied conduct of successful operational maneuver sustained to great depths by an unprecedented logistical effort, combined with limited loss of materiel and weapons on the part of the attacker, will likely become major subjects of future Soviet study. While the Soviets analyze these important issues, it is likely they will be plagued by the nagging questions: "Did not the air phase of the operation render all subsequent ground actions anticlimactic?" and if so, "Why?"

Certainly, Soviet planners recognize the unique circumstances existing in the theater and asymmetries in forces, levels of modernization, and military competence between coalition and Iraqi military establishments. Nevertheless, in all probability, the Allies' ability to forge an effective combined effort and apply force efficiently in both the air and ground phases of the campaign has prompted concern in Soviet military and political circles. The unprecedented disruption of Iraq's military infrastructure, combined with extensive operational maneuver conducted within the context of the Airland Battle concept against Iraq's military center of gravity, seems to have confirmed Marshal Ogarkov's oft-expressed concern about a potential Soviet enemy's so-called war-winning potential in an initial period of any future war. Depending on one's political point of view, this will give cause for concern on the part of both those who have supported the concept of defensive sufficiency and those who

have argued strenuously against it. The events of the Gulf War will likely reinforce the arguments of reformers who have underscored the destructiveness and, hence, folly of future war. Conversely, it will serve as fodder for those who have argued against defensiveness or for greater defensive strength in light of what they perceive as a growing threat to the Soviet Union.

For the United States, it would be a mistake to generalize from the experiences of the Gulf War and assume that the performance of the Iraqi Army with its predominantly Soviet equipment replicates how Soviet forces would operate in future war. The Iraqis did possess Soviet equipment, but did not employ it in the manner of the Soviets. An over-arching system similar to that of the Soviets to integrate weaponry was noticeably absent. The result was the almost immediate loss of the air war and subsequent disaster.

Most Iraqi senior commanders, as Soviet critiques point out, were educated in Western or Indian staff colleges, while lower-level commanders were Soviet educated. Much of the Soviet equipment performed well technically, and the Soviet military will not scrap T-72 tanks because their Iraqi crews chose to abandon them rather than fight.

Soviet military theorists are carefully studying the lessons of Operation Desert Storm and will continue to study them. While that study will be intense and the lessons learned will likely be extensive, the Soviets do not view the results of the war as an indictment of their weaponry or military methodologies. Rather, they will likely view the lessons of the war as an indictment of an inflexible Iraqi war leadership which failed to support its army adequately and gave short shrift to the vital issue of armed forces morale.

Military Strategy. Based on existing and potential threats and their view of the nature of future war, Soviet theorists must develop a military strategy which suits the political-military aims of the state. It is not unreasonable to assume that those aims, given political and economic realities, are essentially defensive. If so, that defensive posture, as Salmonov argues, must be adequate to meet potential threats. We earlier

suggested that the threat, a combination of threat variants 2 (good) and 3 (satisfactory status quo), consisted of eight principal elements:

- 1) Strategic nuclear and peripheral threat by the United States;
- 2) Residual threat from a reduced strength NATO;
- 3) Foreign support of ethnic unrest in the Soviet Union;
- 4) Domestic ethnic unrest (internal threat);
- 5) Unrest in Eastern Europe with Western intervention;
- 6) Unrest in Eastern Europe with Soviet domestic implications;
- 7) Nuclear and chemical weapons proliferation in hostile or potentially hostile border states;
- 8) Transnational threats with military implications.

Since the last five elements are essentially internal or of an indirect nature, Soviet military strategists must deal primarily with the first three elements. These, then, represent the general threat the General Staff and Soviet political authorities must contend with. The nuclear threat and the conventional threat posed by a reduced-strength NATO are familiar ones whose nature is now being altered to some extent by the arms control process. That process, as it develops, provides a rational mechanism for measuring and, if necessary, scaling down the seriousness of the threat. The third element, foreign support for ethnic unrest, is a new dimension which requires further clarification and definition. It also merges with the internal issue of maintaining order within the Soviet Union, which the Soviets anticipate and hope will be a matter for internal security (MVD) forces.

Given the more complex Soviet typology of war, the three most likely threats to the Soviet Union (strategic nuclear and peripheral U.S. threat, residual threat of NATO, and foreign support of ethnic unrest in the Soviet Union) and the two likely threat variations (number 2: demilitarization of NATO—neutrality of Germany, and number 3: status quo with reduced

NATO military threat), Soviet strategists must determine a range of war scenarios in terms of threat, form, and timing. Since threat variant 2 is far less threatening, it is only prudent to plan on the basis of variant 3. In increasing order of seriousness, this variant could result in the following spectrum of hostile action against the Soviet Union:

Case 1: covert or overt support of ethnic unrest within the Soviet Union by bordering states (China, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Rumania, Poland, Finland);

Case 2: covert or overt support of ethnic unrest or indigenous generated unrest within the Soviet Union by bordering states with great power assistance (Japan, United States, Britain, France, Germany);

Case 3: military intervention within the Soviet Union for any reason by NATO or any combination of great powers;

Case 4: deliberate major conventional or nuclear attack on the Soviet Union by opposing alliances or the United States in concert with other powers;

Case 5: attack of unpredictable scope resulting from long-term crisis between major powers and the Soviet Union.

Analysis of the first four cases within the context of current and prospective arms limitations and other political and economic negotiations argues that the likelihood of their occurring is inversely proportional to their seriousness. In short:

1) Nuclear or conventional attack by NATO or the United States is unlikely and will become less so as CFE negotiations progress;

2) For the same reasons as cited, in (1), direct Western military intervention in the Soviet Union is unlikely;

3) Probable unrest in the Soviet Union is likely to afford increasing opportunity for foreign intervention in virtually all border regions, but, in particular, in eastern Europe and in southern and eastern Asia;

4) Planners must keep in mind the possibility of variant 5 (creeping up to war during crisis) and tailor the Soviet strategy posture accordingly.

While the first three judgments support Soviet desires to truncate their armed forces' structure and reduce its readiness posture, uncertainties associated with the fourth possibility will act as a natural brake on this process.

Based on this analysis, the geographical aspect of the threat will change considerably. During the cold war, the principal threat to the Soviet Union emanated from the west (Europe), and only during the late 1960s did a new threat emerge in the east (China). Thus, Soviet strategists formulated a strategic posture and war plans geared to protecting those two high-priority regions.²⁷ Given the altered threats, these priorities will likely change. While CFE agreements produce (and in fact mandate) a reduction in Soviet strategic strength oriented westward, the Soviets will have to continue to maintain defenses in the east and, in addition, look carefully at their defensive posture in the south. These new realities argue for increased Soviet attention to building up strategic reserves in areas outside CFE guidelines regions, such as east of the Urals.²⁸ While satisfying CFE requirements, a buildup east of the Urals will also help the Soviets cope with new strategic threats to border regions in central and eastern Asia. This geographical reapportionment of strategic resources in response to an altered threat will require the Soviets to rethink their geographical framework for planning and conducting war—specifically the current TVD concept.

The Soviets must also judge how future wars will begin, specifically, to what extent traditional views on that issue remain valid today and will do so in the future? As before, the central issue remains the ability to secure the strategic initiative. The traditional view, originated during the 1920s, governed Soviet strategic thought prior to the Second World War and, although somewhat modified, remained valid during the Second World War and cold war. The variants were:

1) Mobilization and concentration of forces by all contending parties prior to war;

2) Partial mobilization and concentration prior to war, but completed during war;

3) One state attacks to achieve operational-tactical advantage, while its opponent mobilizes and concentrates;

4) One state attacks by surprise to achieve strategic advantage before its opponent can mobilize and concentrate. The most dangerous new facet of this variant is the nuclear "first strike."

During the 1920s the Soviets planned on the basis of variants 1 and 2 and during the 1930s on the basis of variants 2 and 3. On the eve of World War II, variant 4 matured in the form of German blitzkrieg, and the Soviets were only partially prepared to deal with it. Since the end of the Second World War, and particularly since the appearance of nuclear weapons, variants 3 and 4 have become the preeminent Soviet concerns in an alliance sense, for they have forced Soviet strategists to address such concepts as "first-strikes," which vastly increase the importance of the strategic initiative.

Soviet strategy in the early 1960s focused on denying any opposing state or alliance a first-strike capability, and in the 1970s and 1980s the Soviet concept of the theater-strategic offensive was designed to counter variants 3 and 4 in both a nuclear and a conventional sense.

Today, as the force reduction process unfolds, Soviet military strategists must study a wider array of variations. They must remain concerned about dealing with a nuclear first-strike in the sense of variant 4, and they must also deal with the potential for full or partial mobilization and concentration of enemy forces during periods of crisis (a modern variation of creeping up to war). In addition, they must be prepared to deal with new variations, that is ethnic unrest and foreign support of domestic unrest with no overt mobilization or with only partial mobilization by a foreign power (in particular, in the case of a neighbor possessing a large peacetime standing army). In essence, they face the threat of revolutionary or guerrilla war

on their own territory, with or without covert foreign support. This prospect blurs the traditional threat indicator of mobilization.

These judgments are based on the assumption that Soviet strategists will confine their judgments within the framework of threat variations 2 and 3 (good and satisfactory cases). Certainly, contemporary domestic (particularly economic) conditions will encourage them to do so. As noted before, however, there is a significant minority of theorists who consider it prudent to base their strategic judgments on threat variant 4 (the worst case). Growing chaos in the Soviet Union would strengthen this view as would a resurgence of authoritarianism or "Great Russian" nationalism.

Predominance of this worst case view would have significant impact on the more or less rational process of strategy formulation outlined above. At the least, it would complicate not only the Soviet Union's (or Russian) strategic position, but would require, as well, fundamental strategic reassessments by all major world powers. Setting aside this more complex question, Soviet study of these issues will proceed within the context of the likely threats outlined above and the national and geographical sources and foci of those threats. The ensuing analytical process is determining and will continue to determine Soviet judgments regarding armed forces' strength, strategic posture, strategic deployment, and force generation.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

If Soviet military strategy continues to evolve in consonance with defensive Soviet military policy and doctrine, a Soviet strategic posture will emerge which is altogether different from that of the 1970s and early 1980s. The new posture is likely to accord with paradigms or models, which the Soviets have either already openly discussed or implied. Whichever paradigm and model emerges, it is clear that it will be based on thorough analysis of past Soviet strategic experiences juxtaposed against changes in the contemporary and future political and military environment. Analysis of past Soviet strategic defensive experiences permits further speculation regarding other prospective models within the proposed range of paradigms. It remains for us to judge which model is most likely to emerge and then to assess its ramifications.

The original range of paradigms proposed by Kokoshin, Larionov, and others is a good starting point for analysis, for it offers a thorough range of options, two of which seem to meet modern demands. The first useful paradigm the Soviets suggested, the second, based on premeditated defense at Kursk, appeared defensive only in a superficial historical light. Closer examination revealed features which contradicted its purported defensive nature. Specifically, defensive fighting took place within the framework of a Soviet strategic offensive plan, and large Soviet strategic reserves earmarked to conduct the offensive tilted the correlation of forces decisively in the Soviets' favor. Future Soviet maintenance of similarly large combat-ready forces and reserves in peacetime would contradict the principal of "defensive sufficiency" and render the strategy clearly offensive.

The Khalkhin-Gol and Korean-based paradigm (number three), which Soviet theorists emphasized after the flaws of the Kursk paradigm became apparent, better matches articulated Soviet intent. It too, however, has weaknesses which cast doubt as to its applicability. Soviet strategy regarding the

Japanese in 1939 was but a part of a larger strategy toward the more menacing foe, Germany. While overall Soviet strategy had, as yet, not become totally defensive in Europe, clearly the Soviets were adopting a defensive posture in the Far East. Restraint against the Japanese at Khalkhin-Gol served the larger purpose of greater readiness against the Germans. Moreover, Soviet secret reinforcement of its forces in Mongolia and achievement of surprise make the case of Khalkhin Gol less convincing.

Subsequently, the Soviets suggested a new model based on a pre-cold war strategy, which seemed to correspond with Kokoshin's and Larionov's second (Kursk) or third (Khalkhin-Gol) paradigms. By providing details of the 1946 GOFG operational plan, the Soviets argued that their pre-cold war strategic posture was defensive and provided strong hints as to the nature of their desired post-cold war strategy in a circumstance of forward defense. When it was advanced in early 1989, this "pre-cold war" forward defense model clearly postulated the basis for a new post-cold war defensive strategy, provided the Soviets had retained their forward groups of forces in central and eastern Europe. Since it now seems clear the Soviets will continue to withdraw their forward groups of forces, this model has become irrelevant to future Soviet strategic concerns. It is clear that, as this force is further reduced in the future, its offensive capabilities will continue to erode if, throughout the process, NATO retains sufficient forces to ensure the correlation of forces remains appropriate for successful defense. Events have rendered this paradigm obsolete as the status of these forward groups of forces has changed from that of a military threat to becoming a hostage to developing events.

Far more disturbing for the Soviets, the precipitous withdrawal of their forward groups of forces into the Soviet Union has created for them a major strategic dilemma. The loss of forward groups means loss of the Soviet's first strategic echelon, with its entire command and control and logistical infrastructure and the loss of its buffer with the West. They must now consider where and how to erect the new first

strategic echelon as the vital element of a new, viable strategic posture.

When Soviet forward groups of forces complete their withdrawal to the Soviet Union, entirely new models will be required to define Soviet strategic posture and its degree of "defensiveness" in a reshaped European balance. Two such models exist, one derived from the 1920s and early 1930s; and one based on conditions existing from 1935 to 1941.

The model which warrants the most attention is that of the 1920s, when the Soviet Union assessed the threat potential of Eastern European successor states, alone or in concert with Western powers. This model is advanced most fervently by those who adhere to the Khalkhin-Gol paradigm.

There are compelling reasons to reflect on Soviet military strategy in the 1920s as a potential indicator of future Soviet strategy. First and foremost, the Soviets are faced with an array of internal and external conditions today, which, to a degree, replicate those of the 1920s. Internally, the Soviet Union faces severe political, economic, and social problems resembling those of the 1920s, including:

- 1) Political instability associated in the 1920s with a struggle for power and a debate over democracy, albeit within the party, as opposed to a similar struggle for more general democracy today;
- 2) Economic crisis in the 1920s associated with Civil War dislocation of the economy and the adoption and subsequent rejection of the economic reforms of the New Economic Policy (NEP), juxtaposed against contemporary economic stagnation and attempted acceleration of the economy (*uskorenie*), restructuring of the economy (*perestroika*) and now more radical reforms (such as private ownership of property);
- 3) Ethnic unrest, associated in the 1920s with civil war and incorporation into the Soviet Union of nationalities, which, for a time during the Civil War had regained their independence, as opposed to agitation for independence by numerous nationalities today;

4) Military discontent in the 1920s associated with tension between "Red" officers and Tsarist "experts" and enlisted alienation connected with the collectivization and industrialization program of the late 1920s; corresponding to ferment within the contemporary Soviet Army over ethnic issues, the role of the army as guardian of order and tradition, and demoralization produced by democratization, the Afghan War, and demobilization;

5) Uncertainty concerning the emerging threat to the USSR, the need to plan for several variants, the uncertain impact of technology on military affairs, the apparent need to incorporate projected changes, and, of course, relationships with Germany in the midst of change.

Compounding these internal difficulties, the Soviets are now watching emerge a Europe and world experiencing changes as drastic as those which occurred after the First World War (although one hopes it is a world which will not be burdened with a modern equivalent of the Treaty of Versailles, which exacerbated international relations). Specifically, old alliances and blocs, which have kept a tense peace for over 40 years, are crumbling with no apparent replacements, a unified Germany is emerging (without what some would define as its "historic" borders); independent successor states are emerging in Eastern Europe, subject to political instability, economic weakness, and ethnic tensions of their own; the global military and economic balance is shifting; and the world is experiencing a revolution in conventional military weaponry.

Each of these stark realities can have unpredictable consequences, and all resemble dilemmas of the past. It is only reasonable that the Soviets will intensely review that past in search for hints as to how to deal successfully with those same dilemmas in the future. In particular, the Soviets will critically examine basic concepts and systems developed in the 1920s and early 1930s concerning their methodology for studying the question of future war, the initial period of war, threat definition, and strategic posture. They may also find much of use from the 1920s in assessing future schemes for force generation and transition from peace to war.

The 1920s paradigm best represents future geopolitical, strategic, economic, and military relationships within a post-CFE Europe and addresses the key issue of Soviet attitudes toward Eastern European successor states and to new European threats. As such it offers the most valuable insights into probable Soviet military strategy of the 1990s. The 1920s paradigm suggests the Soviets will maintain lower peacetime levels of military preparedness, supplemented by a complex mobilization system capable of rapidly transforming the Soviet Army to a wartime footing.

If Soviet military strategy and resultant force posture during the 1920s provides an analogy for an optimistic version of what Soviet military strategy may look like in the future, the late 1930s period provides a far more pessimistic model for the West, as well as for the Soviets. In that decade international conditions turned ugly and threatening for all actors on the international stage. Economic dislocation, growth of totalitarianism, and rampant social discord raised international tensions, increased the likelihood of future war, and altered the very nature of war. In the Soviet Union, it resulted in a major rearmament program and an intense focus on war plans and strategic defense. In the end, despite all Soviet exertions, the strategic defense essentially failed.

It is at least conceivable that unenlightened world leadership in the future, if it fails to comprehend the intricacies of the 1930s, may contribute to a repetition of many of those unpleasant phenomena. Just as the Soviet Union was a major player shaping events then, the Soviet Union will continue to figure significantly in the future European and world structure. Likewise, just as other states played or refused to play a role in developments then, they will continue to play critical roles in the future. In short, those same states which provided context for international events in general, and for developments within the Soviet Union in particular, during the 1930s, will similarly contribute to the context of the future.

In the period prior to June 22, 1941, a strong and hostile Germany in the west and Japan in the east had borders contiguous to the Soviet Union. Now that the Soviets have admitted that their failed 1941 prewar strategy was defensive,

the Soviet strategic posture of that period can provide a basis for thoroughly analyzing future strategies for defense of the Soviet Union. While this emerging model will provide an excellent basis for evaluating military "defensive sufficiency," it will also inherently require detailed discussion of the political and military context—namely the European political and military balance as a whole.

The model of June 1941, which is advanced primarily by those who support the Kursk paradigm, poses three problems for the Soviets. First, Soviet theorists have recently accorded the adoption of the 1941 model a very low degree of probability because nuclear deterrents have largely neutralized all analogous threats.²⁹ Second, Soviet military theorists have only recently admitted their military strategy on the eve of war was defensive. Third, and most important, the defensive strategy of 1941 failed. Despite these problems the 1941 model warrants attention. Soviet implementation of a similar strategy in a post-cold war period will have to deal more effectively with potential threats similar to that of 1941, particularly if nuclear deterrence erodes as a valid defensive concept. Adoption of a new 1941-type strategy will provide the Soviets with the potential collateral benefit of being able to insist on external political and military concessions to reduce the threat and, hence, validate the strategy.

It is clear that today, under pressure of revolutionary changes in the European and world geopolitical balance, accelerated de-Stalinization and possible democratization in the Soviet Union, and the Soviet need for a "strategy for defense of the homeland," both the 1920s model and the 1941 model—with its positive and negative lessons—will become more critical models or, at least, subjects of intensive study as the Soviets shape their new strategy. In fact, that study has already begun.

Should the Soviets rid themselves of the ghosts of 1941, the late 1930s defensive strategic model or that of the 1920s has the potential for offering considerable leverage to the Soviets in their political and military negotiations with the West. If, in fact, defensiveness failed in 1941 because the Soviets seemingly underestimated the external threat, then Soviet

adoption of a similar strategy in the future will require the negation of any possibility of such a threat.

Two such potential threats immediately come to mind. The first, in the form of NATO, exists today in Soviet perceptions. The second, in the form of a unified and militarily powerful Germany, within or outside of NATO, looms as a potential future threat. Each threat, in its own right, must be dealt with for a Soviet 1920s- or 1941-type strategy to be viable in the future. It is indeed possible that such a Soviet strategy could become a vehicle for resolving both problems. This strategy would be viable if the USSR (and Europeans themselves) can be convinced that NATO's military power has been reduced to clearly defensive proportions, and if a weaker NATO emerged in lieu of the creation of a larger German military establishment. This would offer better chances for future political stability in Europe through continued (although reduced) U.S. presence, thus avoiding the major problem following the First World War when a power vacuum, which was ultimately filled by warring nations, existed in Europe.

Throughout any discussions which occur concerning whatever model the Soviets propose and implement, another model requires tangential study—that of Manchuria.³⁰ The Manchurian model stands as a classic case when a clearly defensive posture was secretly transformed into an offensive one. Admittedly, Manchuria was an extreme case, carried out within a particular political and military context. Yet it was representative of a host of lesser examples when a defensive or less threatening posture was secretly and effectively transformed into a major offensive threat. Although many would argue that such a transformation would be unlikely to occur in contemporary or future circumstances, prudence dictates caution. In short, arms control verification regimes must ensure that at all times and in all circumstances, in the case of whatever model emerges, Soviet forces not "be more than they seem."

The 1990s promise revolutionary changes in existing political and military relationships in Europe and, in fact, throughout the world. In large part, this revolution has occurred because of important political, economic, and social pressure

within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which are, in addition, affecting Soviet military policy, doctrine, and strategy. The most apparent effects to date have been the Soviet Union's proclamation of "defensiveness" in its military doctrine and its ensuing search for new strategic solutions. Whatever future strategic posture the Soviet Union adopts, it will be a key element in this revolution. It will dictate the nature of future political and military relationships in Europe and the world and the degree of stability of any new political and military structures which evolve.

The future Soviet strategic posture will, in the last analysis, reveal the true nature of Soviet military doctrine and dictate the form and mission of the Soviet Army. There are issues within the realm of strategy that the Soviets must work out anew or refine. Among these issues are the nature of the threat; concept of future war; scope of theaters of war and military operations; peacetime military strength, dispositions, and force readiness; and strategic deployment and force generation [mobilization] schemes. All of these issues must be resolved without violating Soviet security interests, and each must facilitate smooth transition from peace to war.

Resolution of these strategic issues will have major implications at lower levels of military science, for operational and tactical concepts will be constrained and governed by strategy and the realities of contemporary and future war. Hence, operational art and tactics will emphasize concepts for nonlinear warfare, maneuver, and long-range fires, and evidence greater defensiveness than before. Force structure at all levels will likewise conform to strategic, political, and budgetary constraints to become smaller, leaner, more flexible, defensively oriented, and, if Soviet desires are realized, higher quality. Most important, the force structure will be more expandable to meet wartime requirements.

All of these critical issues have their roots in the past. A clearer understanding of the past will better enable us to comprehend and manage the transition to the future.

ENDNOTES

1. The *nomenklatura* is the finite group of party members in rank order who occupy key party, governmental, economic, and other positions within virtually all Soviet institutions. It, in essence, represents an upper class of Communist "nobility."

2. This assessment, for example, appeared in connection with a review of A. Babakov, *vooruzhennye Sily SSSR posle voiny (1945-1986)* [The Armed Forces of the USSR after the war (1945-1986)], (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987) in V. G. Reznichenko, "Sovetskie vooruzhennye sily v poslevoennyi period" [Soviet armed forces in the postwar period], *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil* [Communist in the armed forces], January 1988), pp. 86-88.

3. The Soviets A. Kokoshin and V. Larionov, "Protivostoianii sil obshchego naznachenii v kontekste obespechenii strategicheskoi stabil'nosti" [The counterposition of general purpose forces in the context of strategic stability], *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* [World economics and international relations, hereafter cited as *MEMO*], June 1988, pp. 23-31. These have been widely discussed by Western analysts to include a number of forums with Western, Soviet, and East European participation.

4. Considerable Western interest in the "Kursk model" was generated by the A. Kokoshin and V. Larionov article entitled "Kurskaia bitva v svete sovremennoi oboronitel'noi doktriny" [The Kursk battle in light of contemporary defensive doctrine], which appeared in the August 1987 issue of *MEMO*. Numerous other Soviet analyses of Kursk have appeared prior to and since publication of this article.

5. Kokoshin and Larionov, p. 27.

6. "Soviets Shifting Military Strategy," *The Kansas City Times*, March 11, 1989, p. A9, which quotes testimony of A. A. Kokoshin in March 1989. Testimony before the U.S. Congress' House Armed Services Committee.

7. "Operativnyi plan deistvii Gruppy sovetskikh okkupatsionnykh voisk v Germanii" [Operational plan for actions of the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany], *VIZH*, No. 2, February 1989, pp. 26-31 (with map).

8. The listed grouping of nations is representative and by no means includes all nations. Assignment to a category is subject to a variety of finite political and economic conditions.

9. One could argue that the Soviet Union faced similar conditions after it signed the Treaty of Brest Litovsk (1918). By virtue of that treaty and other postwar conditions (civil war and Allied intervention), for varying lengths of time, the Soviet Union lost possession of the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbajhan, the Far East, and Tanu Tuva. As soon as the Soviets regained their strength, most of these regions were reincorporated into the Soviet Union.

10. For a superb study of how the Soviets approach future war in an historical and contemporary sense, see Christopher Bellamy, *Soviet Future War*, 2 vols., Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Soviet Army Studies Office, 1990.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 51. The source is referred to as a "confidential discussion." It does, however, match the traditional Soviet approach followed in earlier periods when the General Staff analyzed future war.

12. *Ibid.* This reflects the contents of G. I. Salmanov, "Sovetskaia voennaia doctrina i nekotorye vzgliady na kharakter voiny i zashchitu sotsializma" [Soviet military doctrine and some views on the nature of war in the defense of socialism], *VM*, No. 12, December 1988, pp. 7-20; see almost identical concerns expressed in A. Kokoshin, A. Konovalov, V. Larionov, V. Mazing, *Problems of Ensuring Stability with Radical Cuts in Armed Forces and Conventional Armaments in Europe*, Moscow: Institute of USA and Canada Studies, USSR Academy of Sciences, 1989.

13. A. Kokoshin, "Alexander Svechin on War and Politics," *International Affairs*, No. 11, November 1988, p. 121.

14. Salamanov, pp. 9-10.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

16. Extensive Soviet analysis of this theme of the initial period of war has produced many studies, including S. P. Ivanov, *Nachal'nyi period voiny* [The initial period of war], Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974; M. Cherednichenko, "O nachal'nom periode Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny" [Concerning the initial period of the Great Patriotic War], *VIZH*, No. 4, April 1961, pp. 28-35; P. Korkodinov, "Facti i mysli o nachal'nom periode Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny" [Facts and ideas about the initial period of the Great Patriotic War], *VIZH*, No. 10, October 1965, pp. 26-34; V. Baskakov, "Ob osobennostiakh nachal'nogo perioda voiny" [Concerning the peculiarities of the initial period of war], *VIZH*, No. 2, February 1966, pp. 29-34; A. Grechko, "25 let tomu nazad" [25 years ago], *VIZH*, No. 6, June 1966, pp. 3-15; I. Bagramian, "Kharakter i osobennosti nachal'nogo perioda voiny" [The nature and peculiarities of the initial period of war], *VIZH*, No. 10, October 1981, pp. 20-27; V. Matsulenko, "Nekotorye vyvody iz opyta nachal'nogo perioda Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny" [Some conclusions from the experience of the initial period of the Great Patriotic War], *VIZH*, No. 3, March 1984, pp.

35-42; A. I. Evseev, "O nekotorykh tendentsiakh v izmenenii soderzhania i kharaktera nachal'nogo perioda voyny" [Concerning some tendencies in the changing form and nature of the initial period of war], *VIZH*, No. 11, November 1985, pp. 11-20.

17. Salmanov, p. 10.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

20. *Ibid.*

21. A. D. Borshchov, "Otrazhenie fashistskoi agressii: uroki i vyvody" [Repelling Fascist aggression: lessons and conclusions], *VM*, No. 3, March 1990, pp. 20-22. Borshchov provides distinct lessons with the implication that they are relevant today as well. He writes:

An analysis of the content of prewar theoretical views on the initial period of war and of experience in carrying out a set of practical measures for realizing them in western border military districts provides grounds to note a number of what we view as instructive lessons. First. The failures of 1941 above all are the result of distortions in defense policy on the part of the country's supreme military political leadership, I. V. Stalin's subjectivism and monopoly in choosing the means and methods of achieving objectives, and the ignoring of that scientific store which had been accumulated in the 1930's. Therefore, fulfillment of all defense programs under present-day conditions, and especially measures for preparing to repulse a possible external attack must be based on a scientifically grounded theoretical concept and be conducted on a purposeful, planned basis without any conditionalities or manifestations of subjectivism and dogmatism. This conclusion also wholly conforms to 19th All-Union CPSU Conference lines on strengthening the ties of science and practice. Second. Experience teaches that in the stage of planning to cover the state border and the first defensive operations it is important to consider comprehensively the full set of economic, sociopolitical and strictly military conditions of the situation. USSR Minister of Defense Army General D. T. Yazov notes: "The Soviet Union is forced to prepare for whatever war an aggressor prepares." In this connection the intensifying danger of a surprise attack by a probable enemy who is taking steps to outfit his armed forces with fundamentally new models of weapons and military equipment merits special attention today. It is also important to emphasize that operational plans of border military districts and groups of forces for conducting the first defensive operations must provide for several options of troop operations depending on possible conditions of the aggressor's

initiation of war. Third. Its essence is that combat documents being drawn up under peacetime conditions must be sufficiently specific and simultaneously flexible and permit necessary corrections to be made in the course of a war which has begun, and the command authority and personnel of the covering forces should be oriented, not toward the automatic triggering of documents, but toward actions in conformity with the existing operational-strategic situation. The consequences resulting from fascist Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, a surprise for border military district forces, insistently demand that the USSR Armed Forces be kept in such a condition as to ensure their organized entry into a war even in a more complicated situation than the one which took shape by the morning of 22 June 1941. The efforts of command personnel, political entities and staffs at all levels must be directed toward this above all back in peacetime. In our view those forces earmarked for disrupting an aggressor's invasion, conducting the first defensive operations and delivering retaliatory attacks and surprise retaliatory counterstrikes against him should be kept in the highest state of readiness. Given past experience, troops of border military districts and groups of forces must be capable of executing their assigned combat missions without additional redeployments and reorganizations, i.e., essentially at any moment. Fourth. Advance preparation of theaters of military operations is an important direction for increasing the readiness of covering forces for repelling a possible invasion by a ground enemy. The extent and nature of engineer preparation of installations and the terrain must conform fully to combat missions assigned to those forces stationed in border areas. Past experience teaches that in support of the covering forces' first commitment, it is important to take a substantiated approach to determining the correlation of the distance from the border of defensive lines and positions, lines of operational and other obstacles, deployment lines of counterthrust force groupings, and so on, on one hand, and the distance of the disposition areas and the locations of corresponding units on the other hand. Fifth. Operational and combat training as well as political upbringing and agitation-propaganda work in the covering formations and units must aim personnel above all at ensuring execution of the primary mission—maintaining troops and command and control entities at the level of the threat of the onset of war and reacting promptly to all changes in the probable enemy's plans and intentions. Experience also indicates that with an aggressor's surprise initiation of war, demands increase sharply for autonomy of operations by formations, units and subunits. This obviously can be achieved without great outlays by stationing them in the same locations and areas with planned means of reinforcement and support and by active joint drills, practices and exercises. Sixth. It is common knowledge that in preparing for war, the Fascist German command concentrated its invasion forces in

advance and under other various pretexts at the Soviet border. That operating method from the probable enemy's arsenals cannot be ruled out even now. A series of exercises held in NATO Armed Forces simultaneously in a vast territory from the Barents Sea to the Mediterranean during August-September 1989 is clear proof of this. Such exercises are dangerous in that they are not always subject to unequivocal qualification and are difficult to distinguish from an actual deployment of forces for war. And in order not to repeat past mistakes, the question of the possibility and advisability of granting commanders of formations stationed on territories of border military districts and groups of forces and having missions of covering the state border the right of independently taking adequate steps when the enemy conducts measures for increasing his forces' combat readiness requires very careful study under present day conditions. First of all, this will permit reducing the probability of an aggressor's surprise attack; secondly, it will facilitate keeping forces in an appropriate state of readiness to repel possible invasion. And finally the seventh lesson from past experience. It is that everything previously accumulated must not be taken unequivocally and transferred to modern conditions in its initial form. As a matter of fact, attempts in 1941 to canonize the experience of the initial period of World War I revealed its total groundlessness, as Marshal of the Soviet Union G. K. Zhukov admitted. Consequently, in our view even today the reminder that any past experience requires continuous creative study and practical application only with consideration of the entire set of changes which have occurred since the war and which are occurring now will not be superfluous even today. In other words, at the present time we should take an identically weighted approach both to conclusions drawn based on the experience of preparing border military district forces to repel fascist aggression on the eve of the Great Patriotic War as well as to assessments of the modern military-political situation with consideration of changes in the means and methods of warfare.

22. A. A. Kokoshin and V. N. Lobov, "Predvidenie [Foresight]," *Znamia* [Banner], No. 2, February 1990, p. 182.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*, p. 181. This questioning of the validity of Second World War experience echoes similar questioning by Soviet military theorists in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when they argued that the nuclear revolution (the revolution in military affairs) had negated the value of older forms of war. By 1962, however, theorists began having second thoughts, and they ultimately rejected the "single nuclear option" in favor of studying and

preparing for both nuclear and conventional operations. See G. H. Turbiville, Jr. and G. D. Wardak, eds., *The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy*, Vol. 10, Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1989, pp. 26-27.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

27. In August 1969 the Soviet Union added a 16th military district by separating the Central Asian Military District from the Turkestan Military District, ostensibly to respond to an increased threat from China.

28. In 1989 the Soviets again combined the Central Asian and Turkestan Military Districts. The recent combination of the Ural and Volga Military Districts into a single Ural Volga Military District reduced the overall number of military districts to 14. This marks a diminution in the perceived threat from China, and perhaps increased Soviet concern for their southern flank.

29. V. V. Zhurkin, S. A. Karaganov, and A. A. Kortunov, "Vyzovy bezopostnosti—starye i novye" [Challenges to security—old and new], *Kommunist*, No. 1, January 1988, p.43.

30. A more disturbing model, which the Soviets have understandably not advanced, is the Manchurian model. In this case, a defensive force structure and posture is rapidly converted into an effective offensive one through a combination of *khitrost'* [strategem], *maskirovka* [deception], and a massive covert strategic and operational regrouping of forces with the use of fortified regions to cover the mobilization. This extreme example replicates numerous, documented cases of similar transformations during operations on the Eastern Front in the Second World War. In a future context, this model embraces the circumstances of creeping up to war over an extended period. Inherent in it are issues such as transition to war and mobilization of the front and rear. Soviet military theorists and planners continue to assess this three-front strategic operation in detail. L. N. Vnotchenko, *Pobeda na dal'nem vostoka* [Victory in the Far East], Moscow: Voenizdat, 1966, is one of the best book-length Soviet assessments of the Manchurian operation, while David M. Glantz, *August Storm: The Soviet 1945 Strategic Offensive in Manchuria*, Leavenworth Papers, Vol. 7 and 8, Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1983, is the most substantial Western treatment.

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